

Three-fourths of students (74.2%) saw an anti-tobacco media message in the past 30 days (Table 7). Over seven in ten never smokers (72.8%) and eight in ten current smokers (81.6%) saw a pro-tobacco message in newspapers and magazines during the past 30 days. One in ten never smokers (10.7%) and three in ten current smokers (28.1%) had an object with a cigarette brand logo on it. One in ten never smokers (9.8%) and more than three in ten current smokers (30.2%) were offered free cigarettes by a tobacco company representative. Twice as many male current smokers either had an object with a cigarette brand logo or were offered a free cigarette by a tobacco company representative compared to non-smokers. There was no statistically significant difference between male and female students to media exposure.

V.7- Access and Availability

Table8: Access and Availability, United Arab Emirates GYTS, 2002

Category	Percent Current Smokers who Usually Smoke at Home	Percent Current Smokers who Purchased Cigarettes in a Store	Percent Current Smokers Who Bought Cigarettes in a Store Who Were Not Refused Because of Their Age
Total	13.7 (± 4.4)	48.4 (± 8.5)	79.7 (± 7.3)
Sex			
Male	9.3 (± 4.6)	55.2 (± 8.1)	79.0 (± 8.5)
Female	29.3 (± 10.6)	15.3 (± 10.4)	*

* The number of respondents (n) in this cell is less than 35

Over one in ten current smokers (13.7%) usually smoke at home; however, three times as many female current smokers smoke at home compared to male current smokers (29.3% and 9.3% respectively) (Table 8). Almost half of current smokers (48.4%) purchase their cigarettes in a store, and eight in ten of those (79.7%) had not been refused purchase because of their age.

VI- Discussion

The discussion will focus on the leading topics presented earlier.

VI.1- Tobacco use

Very few people begin to use tobacco as adults, almost all first use has occurred by the time people graduate from high school. Recent data suggests that one-third of young smokers start before the age of ten, and the vast majority of adult smokers started before the age of eighteen.

The results in our study are consistent with these trends and show that one-fourth of ever smokers first tried their cigarettes at less than ten years of age. The study results also show that the likelihood of the burden of tobacco use will increase in the near future where 13.4% of male never smokers and 6.4% of female never smokers are susceptible to initiating smoking.

Next to cigarette smoking, shisha imposes an additional threat on young people's health and longevity where 4.9% of young people who never smoked cigarettes are current shisha smokers, hence increasing the number of young people addicted and breathing the fumes generated by tobacco.

VI.2- School curriculum

The fact that more than half of students in grades 7-10 were not taught about the dangers of smoking, and that three-fourths of them did not discuss the reasons that makes young people their age smoke, creates a major gap in the scope and nature of health information and instructions included in the curriculum regarding tobacco use.

VI.3- Cessation

The indication that more than two-thirds of current smokers desire to stop smoking and have actually tried to stop, dictates the urgent need to establish youth-oriented counseling services and smoking cessation programs to help young smokers quit smoking.

VI.4- Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS)

Young people are exposed to tobacco smoke everywhere. More than one-third of young people (31.6%) live in homes where others smoke, and more than one-fourth of current smokers (27.8%) have one or both parents who smoke.

It is well documented in the literature that an environment conducive to smoking will encourage young people to smoke, especially if role models like parents and peers smoke. In addition to that ETS is a class A carcinogen like Asbestos, Benzene and Radon and claims about three thousands deaths each year in the United States of America.

The dangers of ETS are not well known by current young smokers in the UAE where more than half of them (58.0%) don't think that smoke from others is harmful to them. Therefore, this emphasizes the urgent need to advocate for legislation to ban smoking in public places especially that the majority of both never smokers (72.8%) and current smokers (52.7%) approve of such measures.

VI.5- Knowledge and Attitudes

There is a wide gap regarding the knowledge of the harmful effects of smoking on health between never smokers and current smokers where one-third of current smokers don't think that smoking is harmful to their health compared to only one-tenth of never smokers. This might lead to the conclusion that a large number of young people start smoking due to their ignorance of its consequences.

Another important implication of the data is exemplified by the fact that more current smokers have positive attitudes regarding smoking than never smokers, and more than one-quarter of never smokers think that boys and girls who smoke have more friends and look more attractive. Therefore, there is an urgent need for intervention to remove these misleading and false images of smokers that are usually promoted by the tobacco industry.

VI.6- Exposure to Media and advertising

Young people face enormous pressures to smoke at a time in their lives when they are most susceptible. The tobacco industry devotes an annual budget of nearly US\$ four billion to advertise and promote cigarettes. The results of this study provide a clear evidence that the majority of young people are bombarded with pro-tobacco messages. More than one-fourth of current smokers are offered free samples carrying cigarette brand logos on them and even offered free cigarettes which demonstrates a clear violation for the claimed responsibility of the tobacco industry concerning youth protection from smoking. In addition to that promoting tobacco through sports events and public entertainment poses the greatest threat for they associate a deadly habit with adventure and independence.

VI.7- Access and Availability

Young people, aged 13 -15 years, smoking at home, with or without their parents knowledge reveals the absence of a very important factor to prevent them from smoking; that is, parental guidance and objection to smoking. The ease at which young people can access cigarettes is yet another aspect that encourages those young people to smoke, and despite the fact that half of the current smokers can purchase cigarettes from stores, more than one third can have it for free, either borrow cigarettes from someone else (18.2%), steal it (7.8%) or get it from an older person (6.7%).

VII- Conclusion

The tobacco industry is threatening our youth on all aspects, they package death as life, disease as health and deadly addiction as the taste of freedom and a celebration of life.